

REMARKS:

The Abstract has been objected to because the abstract should be limited to from 50 to 150 words. The Abstract has accordingly been amended so that the number of words falls within this limitation.

Claims 1-25 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicants regard as their invention. This rejection was made because the claims call for the utilization of a transalkylation catalyst in isomerization step rather than an isomerization catalyst. To overcome this basis of rejection the pending claims have been amended to call for an isomerization catalyst to be used in the isomerization step rather than a transalkylation catalyst. Claims 1, 20-23, and 25 were also rejected on the basis that step (5) inaccurately made reference to "the transalkylation step" rather than properly referring to "the alkylation step." To overcome this problem the pending claims have been amended to make reference to "the alkylation step" rather than improperly referring to "the transalkylation step."

Claims 1-6, 8-9, 11-16 and 19-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hervert (United States Patent 3,763,259) in view of GB 809,908. Claims 7, 10, 17 and 18 have also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hervert (United States Patent 3,763,259) in view of GB 809,908 further in view of Haag et al (United States Patent 4,418,235). To further distinguish the invention now being claimed from the teachings of the prior art, the independent claims (claims 1 and 23) have been amended to call for the process being claimed to be void of benzene and claims 24-25 which were directed to a process for producing meta-diisopropylbenzene have been canceled.

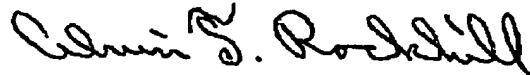
Hervert discloses a process for producing para-diisopropyl benzene that utilized benzene as a starting material. This is in great contrast to the objective of the invention now being claimed which is to eliminate benzene from the entire process. The independent claims of the subject patent application have been amended to call for the process being claimed to be void of benzene. It should be further noted that the product of the isomerization described by Hervert is mixed with the product of the alkylation step and is then introduced into the benzene separation zone. Thus, Hervert mixes the product of the isomerization step with a benzene containing stream. This is again in great contrast to the invention now being claimed where the mixture of

para-diisopropylbenzene and meta-diisopropylbenzene recovered from the isomerization step is fractionally distilled in the absence of benzene. It should also be noted that the products from the disproportionation reactor are also fed into the isomerization reactor of Hervet. It is not obvious in light of the prior art references that the meta-diisopropylbenzene can be simply isomerized into a mixture of para-diisopropylbenzene and meta-diisopropylbenzene that can then be fractionally distilled to recover the para-diisopropylbenzene in the absence of other materials.

The process now being claimed is much simpler than the processes described by the prior art references. It also offers the advantage of totally avoiding the need for benzene.

It is believed that this amendment overcomes the rejections that were made under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and 35 U.S.C. § 112. Thus, it is now believed to be appropriate to allow the subject patent application and such an allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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